

This can go on and on and on and on, or we can simply say, "Look, there is a basic principle involved here. We all know it requires major policy changes, or we will just simply be back here 2 years from now arguing the same thing."

We all know, as the Senator from New Hampshire said, unless we address the three basic programs of Medicare, Medicaid, and welfare reform and change policies that drive that spending and decouple the entitlement from the automatic spending train, we will not have achieved success in balancing the budget. I think everybody understands and knows that. Yet, we are now addressing that or focusing on that question.

I do not know what the solution is, Mr. President. Maybe it is to require that the President of the United States, the leader of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House be sent to Dayton, locked up at Wright Patterson Air Force Base—as were the Bosnian factions, leaders of the Bosnian warring factions; they have been at war with each other for 600 years, and being locked up at Dayton produced a result most thought would not happen—perhaps locking up the three leaders of our Government in Dayton, cutting off and saying, "No Larry King, you cannot read any newspapers, you cannot take any polls, you cannot watch the television, you cannot go to Hilton Head to play golf, and you cannot go to New Hampshire and campaign until you do what is right for America," maybe that is the solution. I do not know.

Doing what is right for America is what ought to be driving us in this debate. I think we all know what is right for this economy and what is right for the President and what is right for the future. I think we all know or we should know that unless we address these fundamental changes in the way in which this Government spends money and we put some restraint and control on that, we will not succeed and we will be back here arguing the same thing.

I regret the Federal workers are out of work. There are a lot of people out of work. AT&T just announced they are going to lay off 40,000 people, so it is not just the Federal workers. In defense of the House Republicans, they are using the only leverage they have against the President. It has not worked very well because the President's spin has captured the headlines and their spin—the Republican House has not captured headlines with that.

I have probably gone over my time. I appreciate the patience of the Chair and my colleagues. I will have more to say about this later, but I do think we ought to focus on the basic issues and I do think, despite what the polls say and despite what the phone calls say, we ought to do what we believe is right for America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

THE IRRESPONSIBLE COURSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, today we are in the 19th day of the longest Government shutdown in the Nation's history. Let me begin, as others have here today, by commending the majority leader for his action yesterday in bringing to a vote, here in the Senate, a continuing resolution to restore funding for the ongoing operation of the Government. I frankly regret that it took us 18 days to have that continuing resolution brought to the Senate floor. But, regardless, I was very pleased to see that action by the majority leader yesterday. I also commend all Senators for agreeing to the passage of the continuing resolution. I think we all know that under Senate rules, any Senator could have objected and could have kept that measure from passing in yesterday's session. It says something about the merits of this issue, this issue of the Government shutdown, that every single Senator agreed to allow that bill to pass.

Today, the House of Representatives will have to decide whether it, too, will pass the continuing resolution that we passed yesterday in the Senate, whether it will pass that resolution so it can be signed by the President and so that funding can be restored to the Government or, in the alternative, whether the House of Representatives will continue in what I believe is the irresponsible course that it has pursued, now, for several weeks.

Since this second shutdown of the Government began, I have spoken three times on the Senate floor. Each time I have denounced the refusal of the Congress to fund the Government as irresponsible. I have denounced it as being an abuse of power by the Congress and an abrogation of responsibility by the majority here in Congress. I believe very strongly that the Founding Fathers who wrote the Constitution expected more responsible conduct by the later generations who would serve in this Congress. I believe very strongly that the American people deserve more responsible conduct by their elected officials.

But I will not repeat today all the arguments that I made in the previous days. Instead, what I want to say today is that today, each Member of the House of Representatives should be given the opportunity to vote on whether or not to restore funding for the normal operation of Government. Let the people's elected Representatives vote on whether they believe that Government should be shut down or we should restore that funding.

I saw the Speaker of the House make a statement yesterday that he did not know whether the votes were there, in the House, and he doubted that the votes were there in the House to pass the continuing resolution that we passed here in the Senate. It is very simple to determine that. Just put the question to a vote. Let each Member come on the floor of the House and cast

his or her vote and answer to his or her constituents for that vote.

The people's elected Representatives need to decide whether the Congress should continue to withhold funds needed to process student loans for this next semester of school. They need to decide whether it is proper for Congress to keep the campgrounds and monuments and visitors centers closed in our national forests and our national parks. They need to decide whether they want to continue withholding funds that are needed to process the 23,000 passport applications that are received each day by the State Department, that were received yesterday, that will be received again today. And they need to vote on whether the Congress wants to withhold one-half of the pay of three-quarters of a million Federal workers or, in fact, withhold the pay of that entire group, entirely, for the month of January—which I understand will be the case unless some continuing resolution is passed.

People deserve to know how their elected Representatives stand on these issues. I know the response that some Republican House Members will give. They will refuse to vote for funding the Government and explain their position by invoking their earnest desire to get to a balanced budget. So let me respond to that just very briefly.

First of all, the issue of whether Congress shares with the President the obligation of maintaining the functioning of Government is a separate question from whether we ought to commit ourselves to reach a balanced budget at some future date. I believe strongly that the Congress does share that obligation to maintain a functioning Government and it is not an obligation that can be ducked by Members of Congress by simply changing the subject.

A second point is the obvious one that we are not going to bring the budget into balance this year. Nobody has stated that we could bring the budget into balance this year. The Speaker of the House has not claimed that, Senator DOLE does not claim that, President Clinton has not claimed that. If everything works perfectly, the best that we could hope for is that if the Government takes certain steps during the next 7 years, and if the economy acts in certain ways during the next 7 years, that that combined result will get us to a balanced budget in the year 2002. So, those Congressmen and Senators, previously Senators, who insist on keeping the Government shut until the Government gets to a balanced budget will have a long time to wait.

Congress meets every year. We pass new budget bills every year. We pass new appropriations bills every year. None of what we do around here is chiseled in granite. All of it is subject to change during this next 7 years. So we need to get on with our business. And part of our business and part of our responsibility is to restore funding for the normal functioning of Government.

Finally, we have a shared commitment between the Congress and the President to reach a balanced budget. What we also need, and need very urgently in my opinion, is a shared commitment, including the commitment of House Republicans, to maintain a functioning Government. This Senate has acted responsibly in passing a continuing resolution to once again fund the Government as we did last evening. Today the House Republicans have the opportunity to act responsibly as well. I sincerely hope that they will seize that opportunity.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

COME TO AN AGREEMENT ON THE BUDGET

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I, like many of my colleagues, have returned to Washington this week, hopeful that the Congress and the President can come to an agreement on the differences they hold over the budget issues that the American public are now so aware of, as a result of the continuing shutdown of Government or a portion of our Government. I stood on this floor just before Christmas and asked the President to give the American people a present, a Christmas present, a balanced budget that would look toward the future, that would assure the economic viability and vitality of this country well into the next generation. And that it was at Christmastime that we should start.

That did not happen. In fact, the President did just the opposite. He vetoed appropriations bills that were sent to him. At least as a result of the veto of one appropriation bill, the Interior appropriation bill, he furloughed, by that action, a good number of workers in my State, Federal employees in the Forest Service and the BLM, who are now extremely frustrated and calling my office and saying why can we not work? Why can we not be paid? Why can we not continue to do what we do for our country?

Let me say to those workers that I am sorry they are not, today, at work. Not just them, but all Federal workers in my State. The President did not veto the Interior appropriations bill because of the dollars and cents of it. He vetoed it because of his belief in a policy or an attitude that is in disagreement with the majority of the U.S. Congress on how many trees ought to be cut in a forest in Alaska, or how certain lands ought to be mined.

So, I am sorry, to those employees in my State, because the Congress did its work and it responded to them, and to the Government, by sending the appropriate appropriations bill, only to be vetoed by the President.

So to those workers, let me tell you. You are today being held hostage by a President who refused to sign appropriations bills that had been sent to him. That is all I want to say on that

issue. And I say that because I believe the Federal workers who are furloughed ought to be paid. They are furloughed through no fault of their own. And this Congress and this President ought to come to an agreement to resolve that issue. And I hope that is accomplished before the week is out.

Yesterday, the Senate spoke in an effort to try to bring Federal employees back onto their jobs. And that did not work for the House is still considering its options as appropriately it should.

So, Mr. President, I hope you recognize the importance of the work that we are trying to accomplish here. And I hope that we would not continually look at just tomorrow because, while I am not happy that our Government is shut down, I am not worried about tomorrow and tomorrow's unemployed Federal workers. But I am worried about the future and a balanced budget; and, that we will have a strong, stable Government as a result of a strong, stable U.S. economy that is able to appropriately fund the needed services of Government and assure the long-term stability of the work force and the responsibilities and the goals of a Government. That is the way it ought to be. That is what this Congress has attempted to look at and make changes in over the course of the last 12 months.

It is my disappointment that the White House never sent a balanced budget to Capitol Hill, and it never once said, except in the last few weeks, that it would come to the table in an effort to resolve the budget crisis that we are now engaged in.

Several weeks ago the President did, while signing a continuing resolution, commit himself for the first time to work toward a balanced budget; to try to match up the rhetoric of his last campaign with the actions of his administration. Yet, the American people have watched. And we have worked day after day through Christmas and now into the new year at the White House and here on Capitol Hill to try to resolve the differences just to honor the commitment that we made to the American people and to try to cause this President to honor his.

I know there are fundamental differences. There are differences that are very difficult to resolve because there are some in this Congress, and certainly many in the administration, who do not believe in a balanced budget but who have profited politically over the years by the longevity of their service by assuring the perpetuation of the welfare state mentality; that you could just give and give and borrow and borrow and buy your way back year after year and continue to serve and to say all is well with the American citizen, the American Government, and the American economy.

While all was well for the short term, what became overpowering to the American people was the growth of a debt that is nearly \$5 trillion by its total amount and that is costing well over \$200 billion a year just to finance.

Finally, the American people spoke very clearly in the last general election across this country when it said the future of our country is every bit as important as the current well-being of our Government and the well-being of our citizens.

So I am here to work to resolve the issue. I say to the Federal workers in my State and across the Nation that while I wish you were not furloughed, and while I support you being paid when you return to work, and when we produce a balanced budget the future of our country is so very much more important than the short-term difficulty that I am sad you are experiencing but that, in fact, you are experiencing because the policies that will cause this Congress and our Government to operate in a near balanced budget year in and year out to stop building mounting debt is what is fundamentally important for the new year.

So while the President was unwilling to give the American people a Christmas gift, let me ask you, Mr. President, to make a New Year's resolution along with all of the Congress to by this weekend come to terms with the differences that we have between us to resolve a balanced budget in 7 years using the Congressional Budget Office numbers that we can all agree on, that makes sense to the American people, and that for the new year sets a resolution that says for the future, for America's future, for our young people's future, we will build a strong and stable economy in a Government whose policies are based on serving the truly needy but also recognize that the free market system unfettered by an ever-growing Federal Government is the one that serves the American people best.

Mr. President, make that New Year's resolution with us today. Resolve the issue before the week is out so that employees can go back to work who are responsible and dedicated and furloughed through no fault of their own. And they can be compensated, and the American people can see that politics in Washington is not politics or business as usual but that we have heard them well, we have heard them loudly, and we have heard them clearly. And we responded by producing a balanced budget that charts for future generations a responsible Government, and a strong and growing U.S. economy.

I yield the remainder of my time.

Mr. SARBANES addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, we have witnessed over the last few weeks an unprecedented effort to use a coercive tactic in order to achieve a particular substantive result—in my judgment, a totally irresponsible and outrageous tactic; and, this is, to hold Government hostage by closing it down and, therefore, not only depriving the Federal workers of the opportunity to